

Caucasus Protected Areas Fund (CPAF)

Signature of Pilot Project at Khosrov Forest State Reserve

The CPAF is pleased to announce the signing of its pilot project grant with the Republic of Armenia's Ministry of Nature Protection to support Khosrov Forest State Reserve. Minister Aram Harutyunyan and CPAF Executive Director David Morrison signed the agreements in Yerevan earlier this month.

Khosrov Forest is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna. Important mammal species found in the reserve include the threatened and endemic Caucasian leopard, the Eurasian lynx, Bezoar goat and Armenian mouflon. Additionally it is an important bird area (IBA), according to Birdlife International, and hosts over 1800 vascular plants within its borders, including the endemic pear tree, *Pyrus chosrovica* Gladkova (Khosrov's pear).

The CPAF will contribute to the overall budget of the PA, and over the three-year course of the grant, its funding will lead to a number of improvements. The first year, for example, will see the purchase of key patrol equipment, the roll out of a tourist program, and the introduction of a biodiversity monitoring program, all of which the reserve cannot currently afford. Importantly, the salaries of the PA's protection staff will also be supplemented. Over the life of the program, there will be an increasing focus on PA management effectiveness to ensure that the overall protected area budget is wisely spent.

David Morrison, Executive Director of the CPAF, said:

"Following last year's success with the Borjomi-Kharaguli project in Georgia, we have gone from strength to strength with our Khosrov pilot project in Armenia. The CPAF has now delivered the initial 2010-2012 projects in both countries as planned. We salute the work of our partners in Armenia's Ministry of Nature Protection and its Center for Environmental Projects in making this happen.

"The basic operating expenses of one PA in both Armenia and Georgia are now covered, and we plan to start work soon on a second project for 2011-2013 in another magnificent protected area in Armenia and Georgia. However, there are at least a dozen more PAs in need of support in Armenia and Georgia alone, and we still have a long way to go before we secure the incredible asset represented by the Caucasus' PA systems. Nevertheless, today is a very promising start to our work in Armenia and another important milestone in our mission to protect bio-diversity in the Caucasus."

For more information on our Khosrov Forest project, please visit us at:

<http://www.caucasus-naturefund.org/about-current.html>

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Khosrov Forest—View onto Mount Ararat

Background on the Caucasus Protected Areas Fund:

The CPAF commenced operations in 2008 with initial sponsorship from the German government (through BMZ and KfW), WWF Germany, Conservation International and Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund. The Caucasus is recognized by the WWF and Conservation International as the most biologically diverse region in a temperate zone in the world. The CPAF focuses on the core Caucasus countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, each of which obtained independence from the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s. In all three countries there is an abundance of pristine nature, and a developing system of national parks and reserves, but a severe shortage of funds for the day-to-day work of preserving it. Our mission is to meet this critical but unaddressed need: the funding of operating and maintenance costs for protected areas, such as salaries for rangers, park scientists and information officers, and costs for equipment, supplies and training.

In a region where political strife continues, this initiative represents a rare display of cooperation and dialogue among the three focus countries. In endorsing the establishment of the CPAF, each has agreed to submit proposals to increase funding for the preservation of their natural treasures. Critically, they have also agreed to provide at least 50% of the funding—assuring local “ownership”—of the programs. The CPAF will supply on an ongoing basis the balance. As a by-product, we hope to promote this nascent regional dialogue. Indeed the German government's contribution to the CPAF was made in the context of its Caucasus Initiative which encourages cross-border cooperation and contributes to conflict prevention.

The CPAF is actively seeking to broaden its donor base to enable to fulfill its promise in this vital region.

For more, visit our web-site at: www.caucasus-naturefund.org